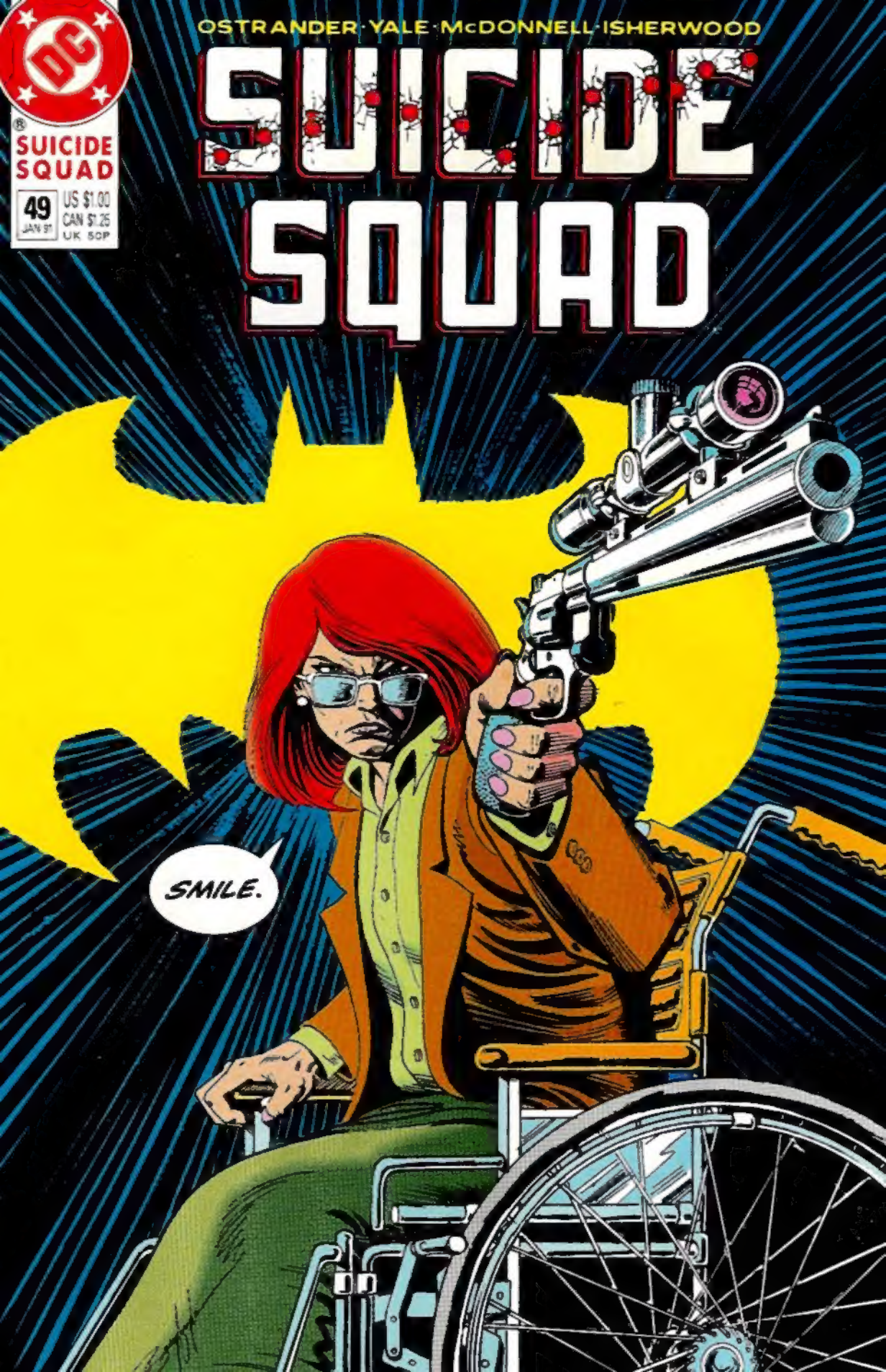
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YEAH--HE WAS THAT GUY WITH THE "THINKING HELMET"--AMPLIFIED HIS INTELLECT LONG BEFORE COMPUTERS EXISTED. USED TO FIGHT THE ORIGINAL FLASH AND POUND LIKE THAT.
DIED ON THAT DISASTROUS MISSION IN SOUTH AMERICA, THE ONE THAT ONLY FLAG WALKED AWAY FROM. THE ONE YOU NEVER TALK ABOUT.
YEAH, THAT'S THE ONE.
HE WAS THE OLD THINKER. CARMICHAEL'S THE NEW ONE.
HE WAS THE SUBJECT OF AN ILL-CONCEIVED EXPERIMENT USING THE THINKER'S HELMET. HE SECRETLY WRESTED CONTROL OF THE HELMET AWAY FROM THE SCIENTISTS AND ORDERED IT TO ANALYZE ITSELF.
CARMICHAEL THEN INSTRUCTED THE HELMET TO RECONFIGURE ITS TECHNOLOGY INTO A SERIES OF MICROCHIPS WHICH WERE SURGICALLY IMPLANTED INTO HIS BRAIN BY SAID SCIENTISTS.
THAT WAS STUPID! HOW'D HE GET THEM TO DO THAT?!
GET WITHIN TEN FEET OF CARMICHAEL AND YOU'RE INSIDE A PSI FIELD WHERE HE CAN PRETTY MUCH CONTROL YOUR MIND.
CARMICHAEL'S ALSO HAD THEM INSTALL A SERIAL PORT AT THE BASE OF HIS NECK SO HE CAN PLUG DIRECTLY INTO A COMPUTER.
THE KIDS WHAT THEY CALL A CYBERPUNK. AND OH YEAH--HE'S ALSO BEEN DIAGNOSED A SOCIOPATH.
BLEEDIN' LOVELY! SIMPLE MISSION, SHE CALLS IT! PIECE O' BLOODY CAKE! NO WUCKAS! I'D RATHER PLAY FOOTSIES WITH BLEEDIN' KOBRA!
NO BLOODY WAY I'M DOIN' THIS, YA GREAT COW!

WITH VIXEN AND VERTIGO DOWN, IVY AWOL, AND RAVAN DEAD, WE'RE SHORT-HANDED. THESE ARE POSSIBLE ADDRESSES WHERE CARMICHAEL MIGHT BE FOUND. WE'LL ALL TAKE SOME--INCLUDING ME.
INCLUDING YOU TOO, DOWN UNDER!
STUFF IT! THIS IS TOO MUCH LIKE BLOODY WORK! GIVE IT TO THE POLICE, EH? I WON'T DO IT!
FINE. YOU'RE FIRED. GO OUT AND GET A REAL JOB.
OI! C'MON, WALL! I WAS JUST JOKING AROUND A BIT!
I'M NOT. I AM RUNNING THIS SHOW AND YOU CAN DO AS I SAY OR YOU CAN GET THE HELL ON OUT, HARKNESS. YOU READ ME?
RIGHT! TOO RIGHT! WHATEVER YOU SAY, YOU BET!
NO ONE KNOWS HOW TO TAKE A BLEEDIN' JOKE ANYMORE GIRLIE!
WHAT DO WE DO IF WE FIND THIS PIECE OF WORK? NAIL HIM?
NO. THAT MIND CONTROL POWER CALLS FOR SOME CO-ORDINATION. REPORT IN AND WAIT FOR INSTRUCTIONS.
WHY DON'T WE JUST SHOOT HIM?

BECAUSE I DON'T WANT YOU TO KILL HIM. DO NOTHING UNLESS HE TRIES TO KILL YOU...
TO STOP HIM, I MAY HAVE TO KILL HIM.
NOT YOU. YOU COULD JUST KNEECAP HIM.
THAT'S TRUE.
EACH OF YOU HAVE SPECIFIC ADDRESSES. GO CHECK THEM OUT.
THE AIRLINES FIND MY MISSING LUGGAGE YET?
NOT YET. IT WAS SPOTTED IN ANKARA BUT THEN THEY LOST TRACK OF IT AGAIN.
BANG.
MAYBE IT'S TIME TO FIND A WAY TO KILL ME OLD MATE LAWTON BEFORE ME OLD MATE LAWTON KILLS ME.
4

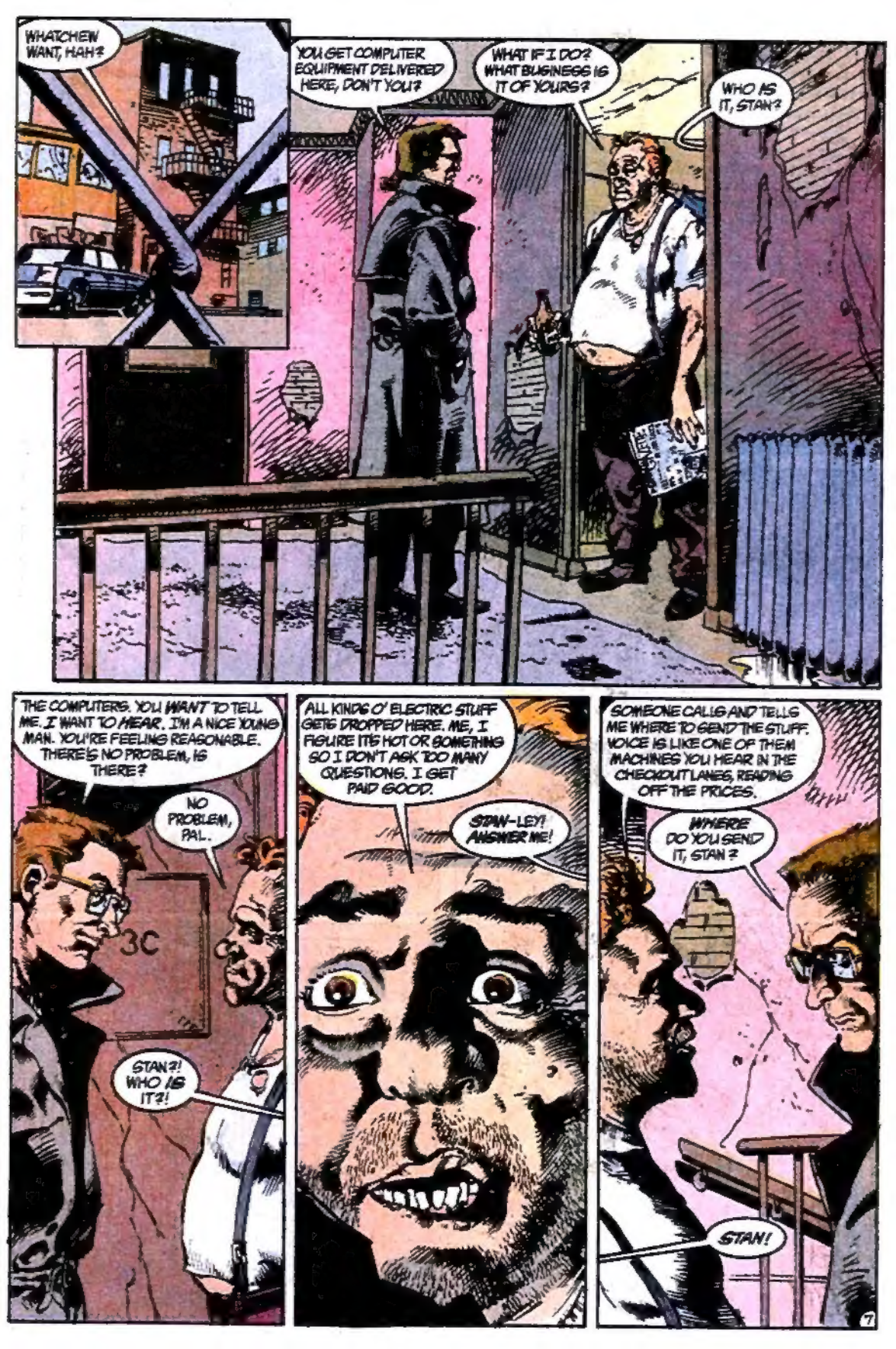
HOW'S MARI DOING?
DO I LOOK LIKE HER DOCTOR? THINK I'VE MEMORIZED HER CHART? YOU SO DAMN CURIOUS, WHY DON'T YOU LOOK IN THE INFIRMARY YOURSELF AND SEE?

THE SQUAD IS EVEN LESS HEALTHY MENTALLY, IT WOULD SEEM, THAN I REMEMBER.
HARKNESS IS HARKNESS, A CERTAIN PERCENTAGE OF LAWTON IS JUST AN ACT, AND BEN ISN'T AS BAD AS HE WANTS US TO THINK.

AND YOU?
SAME AS I EVER WAS, DOCTOR.
PITY.

I NOTICED YOU DIDN'T MENTION ORACLE TO THEM.
THEY DON'T NEED TO KNOW THAT--OR THAT THE MISSION'S A FREEBIE. HELL, I'VE GOT A SECRET I'VE KEPT EVEN FROM YOU, SIMON.

THIS HERE'S THE ATOM.
HE'LL REMAIN HERE IN CASE ORACLE CHECKS IN AGAIN. AT THAT POINT, HE'LL JUMP THROUGH THE PHONE LINES AND LINK UP WITH HER.
LEAVING THE ATOM BEHIND ALLOWS ME TO PERSONALLY JOIN THE HUNT FOR THIS IDIOT THINKER OF YOURS. GOT A SURPRISE OR TWO UP MY SLEEVE FOR HIM.
CARMICHAEL'S GOT A GOOD HEAD START, THOUGH. OUR ONLY HOPE IS TO COUNTER WITH NUMBERS.
BUT I THOUGHT THE ATOM WAS DEAD!
OH, THAT WAS RAY PALMER, THE OLD ATOM.
SIMON, MEET ADAM CRAX. THE NEW ATOM.


WHATCHEW WANT, HAH?
YOU GET COMPUTER EQUIPMENT DELIVERED HERE, DON'T YOU?
WHAT IF I DO? WHAT BUSINESS IS IT OF YOURS?
WHO IS IT, STAN?
THE COMPUTERS. YOU WANT TO TELL ME. I WANT TO HEAR. I'M A NICE YOUNG MAN. YOU'RE FEELING REASONABLE. THERE'S NO PROBLEM, IS THERE?
NO PROBLEM, PAL.
3C
STAN?! WHO IS IT?!
ALL KINDS O' ELECTRIC STUFF GETS DROPPED HERE. ME, I FIGURE ITS HOT OR SOMETHING SO I DON'T ASK TOO MANY QUESTIONS. I GET PAID GOOD.
STAN-LEY! ANSWER ME!
SOMEONE CALLS AND TELLS ME WHERE TO SEND THE STUFF. VOICE IS LIKE ONE OF THEM MACHINES YOU HEAR IN THE CHECKOUT LANES, READING OFF THE PRICES.
WHERE DO YOU SEND IT, STAN?
STAN!

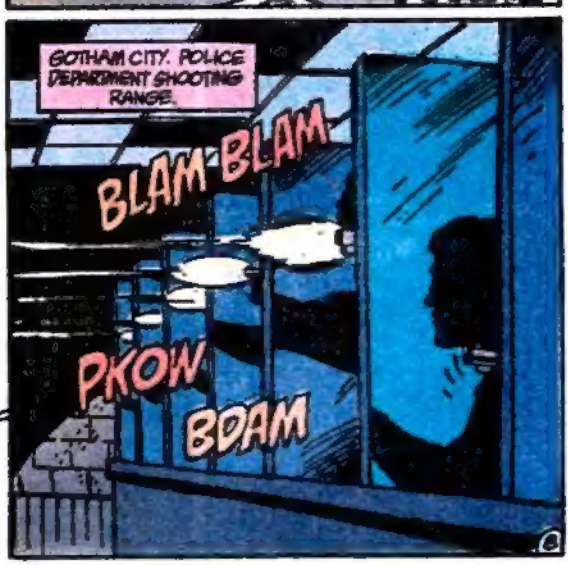
DIFFERENT PLACES, EVERY TIME. LAST LOAD WENT TO AN AMY BEDDOES, HOTEL TAMARINDO, 35 HUDSON.
STANLEY! YOU THINK I TALK JUST TO HEAR MYSELF TALK?! WHO IS THAT AT THE DOOR WITH YOU?!

YOU KNOW, STAN, YOUR WIFE IS A COW. SHE MAKES YOU CRAZY, TOO, I KNOW. WHY DON'T YOU DO US ALL A FAVOR AND KILL HER, HM? STRANGLE HER. RIGHT NOW.
OKAY!

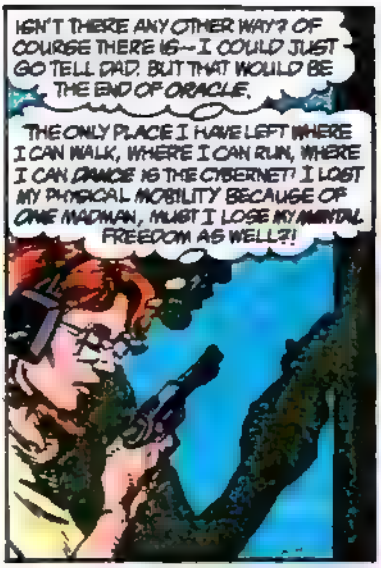
STAN? WHAT ARE YOU DOING?! STANLEY! STOP IT! YOU'RE SCARING ME!
STANLEY!

GURR HHG!?

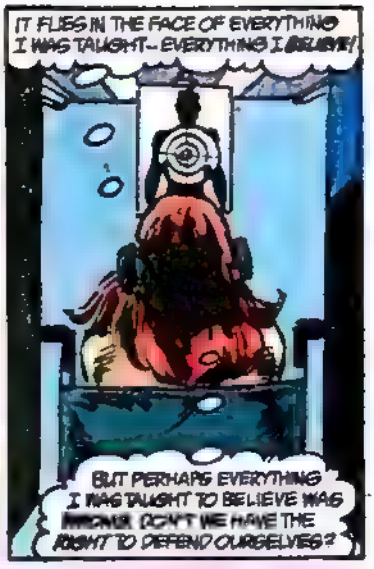
AMY BEDDOES, EH?
GHHHGGGK!?


GOTHAM CITY. POLICE DEPARTMENT SHOOTING RANGE.
BLAM-BLAM
PKOW
BDAM

BLAM BDAM
PKOW BLAM
BLA
CEASE FIRING. RELOAD. PREPARE FOR NEXT SEQUENCE.
DEAR GOD, WHAT AM I DOING?! I HATE GUNS!
SHUT UP! YOU KNOW VERY WELL WHAT YOU'RE DOING!
YOU'RE PREPARING TO KILL SOMEONE.
YOU TOUCHED THAT--MANIAC'S MIND! YOU KNOW WHAT HE WANTS TO DO!
CARMICHAEL'S A SOCIOPATH! HE WANTS TO KILL YOU, YOUR FATHER--ANYONE WHO CARES ANYTHING ABOUT YOU!
YOU SHORE--NEVER AGAIN! YOU'D NEVER BE A VICTIM AGAIN!
BLAM


ISN'T THERE ANY OTHER WAY? OF COURSE THERE IS--I COULD JUST GO TELL DAD. BUT THAT WOULD BE THE END OF ORACLE.
THE ONLY PLACE I HAVE LEFT WHERE I CAN WALK, WHERE I CAN RUN, WHERE I CAN DANCE IS THE CYBERNET! I LOST MY PHYSICAL MOBILITY BECAUSE OF ONE MADMAN, MUST I LOSE MY MENTAL FREEDOM AS WELL?!

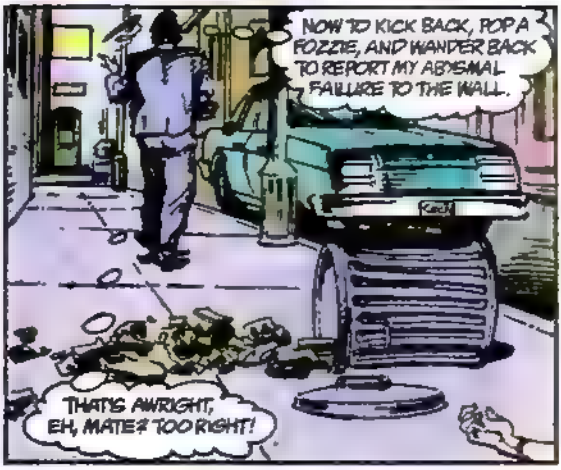
THAT'S NOT THE REAL QUESTION, IS IT? THE REAL QUESTION IS--CAN I KILL HIM?! CAN I PHYSICALLY MAKE MYSELF DO IT?!
I WON'T BE A VICTIM AGAIN. BUT DOES THAT MEAN I MUST BECOME A KILLER?


IT FLIES IN THE FACE OF EVERYTHING I WAS TAUGHT--EVERYTHING I BELIEVE!
BUT PERHAPS EVERYTHING I WAS TAUGHT TO BELIEVE WAS WRONG. DON'T WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO DEFEND OURSELVES?

NO!

NO!

BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM
ELSEWHERE...
BLOODY COW! STICKS ME BUNS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE BLOODY GHETTO AND TELLS ME TO GO LOOKING FOR ANOTHER PIECE OF WHITE BREAD.
GOD THIS! I'M OFF! HOLE UP IN A BAR AND TELL HER I COULDN'T FIND A BLOODY THING.
FRE
ROLL
HEY, MAN. YOU IN THE WRONG NEIGHBORHOOD. THIS IS OUR NEIGHBORHOOD. VISITORS HAFTA PAY A TOLL.
CHOOM OFF, YA BLOODY DROOB! I'M LOOKING FOR SOMEONE.
YOU FOUND US. GIMME YO' WALLET!
OH, I'LL GIVE YOU SOMETHING, TOO RIGHT!




"HOTEL TAMARINDO".

NO, DAD. I'M FINE. I'M OKAY.

HOTEL TAMARINDO

THE CONFERENCE WILL BE OVER IN A DAY OR SO AND THEN I'LL BE HOME, DAD, WE TALKED ABOUT ALL THIS, REMEMBER? I HAVE TO GET OUT MORE.

YES, I'LL BE CAREFUL. YES, LOVE YOU, TOO. 'BYE.

I'M SORRY, DAD. IT'S ALWAYS BEEN EASY TO LIE TO YOU--YOU'VE ALWAYS TRUSTED ME COMPLETELY. I JUST ALWAYS FELT IT WAS BETTER THAT YOU DIDN'T KNOW SOME THINGS.
IT'S BETTER YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT I HAVE TO DO NOW.
I'VE GET A TRAP THAT'S WHAT THIS "AMY BEDOOES" LIE IS ALL ABOUT. I'LL LURE CARMICHAEL HERE AND--KILL HIM?!
WELL, WHY NOT? ISN'T THAT WHAT SOCIETY TELLS US TO DO? GET A GUN! DEFEND YOURSELF!
THAT'S NOT THE REAL QUESTION, IS IT? THE REAL QUESTION IS--CAN I KILL HIM? CAN I PHYSICALLY MAKE MYSELF DO IT?!
BABS, YOU'D BETTER DECIDE THAT BEFORE...
HEL-LO, AAAAAAMY!
ELSEWHERE...
POLICE
THAT'S HIM. THAT'S LAWTON, I SWEAR IT. THE NEW ORLEANS COPS WANT HIM FOR QUESTIONING--LET'S MOVE ON HIM!
I DUNNO, MIKE--SHOULDN'T WE GET SOME BACKUP OR SOMETHING? I READ THIS GUY'S DANGEROUS.
YOU WANTA EHAZE THE SPOTLIGHT? LOOK, HE'S HEADING DOWN THE ALLEY! GO! GO! DON'T LOSE HIM!

VRUM

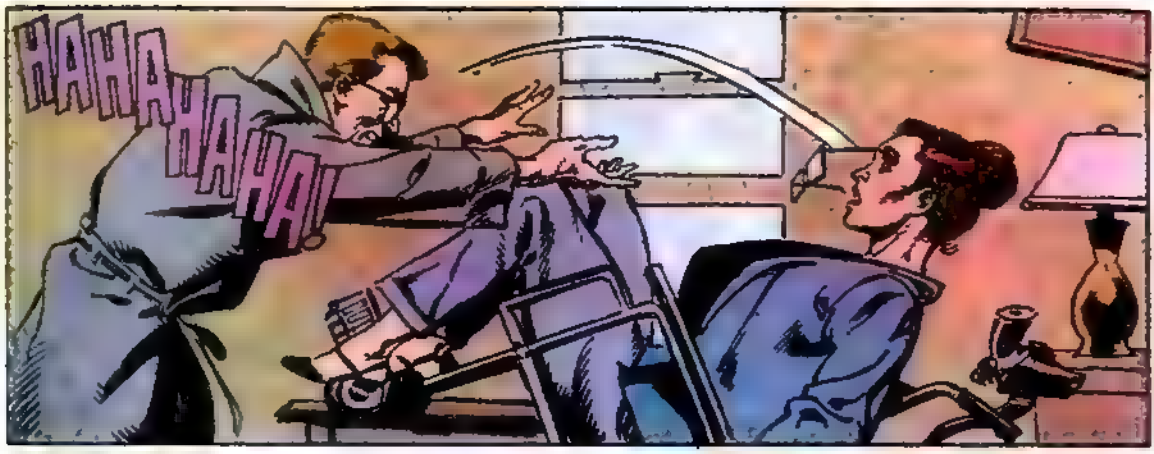
HE'S ONTO US! C'MON, GET OUT OF THE CAR! MOVE! MOVE!

UHH! HE LOCKED IT, GEORGE!
C'MON, WE'LL GO AROUND THE FRONT!
WHOM

DROP 'EM
THEN KICK 'EM AWAY HANDS BEHIND YOUR HEADS.

BOOM BOOM BOOM
BOOM BOOM BOOM

I'M BUSY. I GOT WORK TO DO.
DON'T ANNOY ME ANYMORE.
WHAT DO WE DO NOW, GEORGE?
WE STAND LIKE THIS FOR ABOUT HALF AN HOUR. THEN WE FIND A PHONE AND CALL IT IN. WE SAY WE GOT ATTACKED BY A GANG OF SNIPERS, AND MAYBE WE BOTH COLLECT OUR PENSIONS SOME DAY.
GOT IT!
LET'S GO THROUGH THIS AGAIN, AAAAAAMY.
YOU SAY THAT ORACLE PICKS UP THE SHIPMENTS HERE FROM YOU BUT YOU'VE NEVER ACTUALLY SEEN HER.
N-NO, ORACLE HAS AN EXTRA KEY. I'M SUPPOSED TO BE OUT WHILE SHE COMES. SHE--SHE'S SUPPOSED TO BE ON HER WAY OVER. I TALKED TO HER JUST BEFORE— JUST BEFORE YOU--CAME IN...!
WHY DON'T I BELIEVE YOU, AAAAAAAMY?


HAHAHAHA!

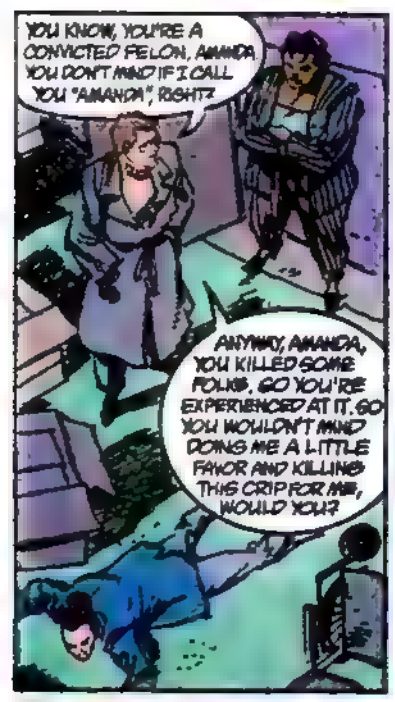
LOOK AT THIS ROOM! IT'S SET UP FOR SOMEONE WHO WALKS! IS THIS WHEEL-CHAIR JUST A RUSE, AAAAAAAMY? ARE YOU PLAYING GAMES WITH ME, AAAMY?!
SHALL I RIP OPEN YOUR MIND AND FIND OUT, AAAAAAAMY?!

AHEM.

SO THERE YOU ARE, YOU NASTY BOY, YOU.

I KNOW YOU. YOU'RE AMANDA WALLER! I READ ALL ABOUT YOU IN THE PAPERS ABOUT A YEAR OR SO BACK!
BUT YOU COULDN'T BE ORACLE—OR, COULD YOU?!

YOU DON'T REALLY WANT TO USE THAT GUN, NOW DO YOU, AAAAAAAMY?


YOU KNOW, YOU'RE A CONVICTED FELON, AMANDA. YOU DON'T MIND IF I CALL YOU "AMANDA", RIGHT?
ANYWAY, AMANDA, YOU KILLED SOME FOLKS, SO YOU'RE EXPERIENCED AT IT. SO YOU WOULDN'T MIND DOING ME A LITTLE FAVOR AND KILLING THIS CRIP FOR ME, WOULD YOU?

OF COURSE, THEN YOU CAN KILL YOURSELF. THAT WAY, NO MATTER WHICH OF YOU ORACLE, IT WILL ALL BE TAKEN CARE OF.
SAY "GOO-BYE," AAAAAAAAMY.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING? I DIDN'T TELL YOU TO LOOK AT ME! GO KILL THE CRIP!

WHAM!
HEY! HEY? YOU HAVE TO DO WHAT I TELL YOU! WHY AREN'T YOU DOING WHAT I TELL YOU?!

I WAS WEARING MY "THINKING CAP" WHEN I STARTED TO TRACK YOU. IT TOLD ME WHAT I HAD TO DO TO JAM YOUR FIELD. IT DON'T WORK WITH ME, YOU SNOTTY LITTLE PUNK.

BAM!

KRAK!

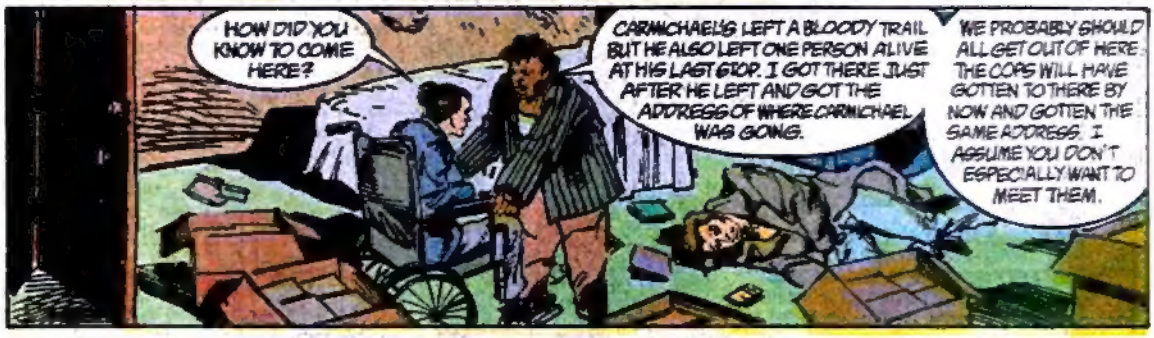
WHAM!

STAND AWAY FROM HIM, MRS. WALLER.

HEY, HEY! GOOD GIRL, AAAAAMY! DIN'T...EVEN HAFTA...TELL YOU...!
HEY! HEY! NO!...GOTTA FOCUS...YOU CAN'T...!
YOU CAN'T DO IT, GIRL.
I'VE GOT TO DO IT! HE'S A SOCIOPATH-- HE WANTS TO KILL ME AND MY FAMILY-- MY FRIENDS!
WHO YOU REALLY TRYING TO KILL, GIRL?

BLAM!
BLAM!
BLAM!
BLAM!
NO ONE.
TAKE THIS, PLEASE, MRS WALLER.
NO! GIVE IT TO ME!

KRAK!


HOW DID YOU KNOW TO COME HERE?
CARMICHAEL'S LEFT A BLOODY TRAIL BUT HE ALSO LEFT ONE PERSON ALIVE AT HIS LAST STOP. I GOT THERE JUST AFTER HE LEFT AND GOT THE ADDRESS OF WHERE CARMICHAEL WAS GOING.
WE PROBABLY SHOULD ALL GET OUT OF HERE. THE COPS WILL HAVE GOTTEN TO THERE BY NOW AND GOTTEN THE SAME ADDRESS. I ASSUME YOU DON'T ESPECIALLY WANT TO MEET THEM.

NO. THEY CAN HAVE THE THINKER, THOUGH.
WHY? HE'LL JUST PLEAD CRAZY AND GO TO ARKHAM ASYLUM. I CAN THINK OF MORE CONSTRUCTIVE USES TO MAKE OF OUR THINKER.

ALSO GOT AN OFFER TO MAKE TO YOU.
YOU GOT A THING ABOUT PRIVACY. FINE. I WON'T PRY. BUT I THINK WE CAN BE A HELP TO EACH OTHER IF YOU'RE WILLING TO LISTEN.

YOU SAVED MY LIFE AND HELPED KEEP ME FROM TAKING A LIFE.
ALL RIGHT, MRS. WALLER--I'LL LISTEN.

BACK AT THE INSTITUTE FOR META-HUMAN STUDIES...

I'M SORRY, GENERAL STUART. I DON'T KNOW WHERE YOU GOT THE IDEA THAT AMANDA WALLER WAS HERE BUT, AS YOU CAN SEE, SHE CERTAINLY ISN'T.

DR. LA GRIEVE, LET'S NOT PLAY GAMES.

I KNOW AMANDA WALLER WAS HERE. MY SOURCES ARE VERY GOOD. MARI McCABE AND WERNER VERTIGO ARE BOTH HERE, SO COULD YOU JUST PLEASE TELL ME--WHEN WILL WALLER BE BACK?

I HONESTLY DON'T KNOW, GENERAL. PERHAPS IF YOU COULD BE MORE OPEN WITH ME, I COULD BE OF MORE HELP TO YOU.

SIMON--I'M NOT AN ENEMY. I HELPED AMANDA TAKE CHARGE OF THE SQUAD ORIGINALLY, REMEMBER? I NEED THE SQUAD NOW.

A MISSION? ARE YOU HERE IN AN OFFICIAL CAPACITY, GENERAL?

NO, SIMON--A PERSONAL ONE. IT INVOLVES A DEBT OF HONOR TO SOMEONE WHO'S DIED, A DEBT THAT SHE AND I AND ALL THE SQUAD OWE.

I WANT HER TO FIND MY GODSON--THE ONLY SON OF RICK FLAG!

NEXT: OUR FIFTIETH ISSUE! DOUBLE-SIZED! THE RETURN OF OLD FRIENDS, BOTH LIVING AND DEAD; AND THE UNVEILING OF THE TRUE IDENTITY OF ONE OF THE SQUAD'S GREATEST FOES!

# DEBT of HONOR!

# SUICIDE NOTES

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Dear Squad Scribes,

Issue #45 was simply excellent. I think you people are really starting to put something together with this book. If you're trying to make the comics world sit up and take notice of this title, you're doing an admirable job of it.

How very timely your story of Middle East intrigue is, giving the reader another view of this complicated and vital area of our world. The interplay between Amanda Waller and the man who I assume is the Egyptian Prime Minister was enlightening—I never really considered the idea of Middle Eastern metahumans. How about showing us some of Egypt's "Mamelukes" before everything is said and done, or in some future story?

I have already exalted the talents of Geof Isherwood in previous letters, but I feel I must reiterate. Geof is one of the finest artists DC has working for them. His pencils and inks are incredibly rich, and convey more emotion than those of most other artists. As much as I enjoyed Luke McDonnell's work, and loved Karl Kesel's, and respected John K. Snyder's, I feel Mr. Isherwood is the quintessential Suicide Squad artist. You can't go wrong with his name in the artist's credit.

I have two suggestions for future story and character developments. First, please give Ravan something to differentiate him from Bronze Tiger—their abilities and styles are almost too similar. Perhaps you could have Ravan move closer to Kali, and in some way gain some shamanic or magic powers—like an Arab version of Ramban. Second, bring Stalnoivolk into the Squad. He must be in an American prison somewhere, and he is probably disgruntled with his soft-line reformist government, so I think he might prefer service with the Squad to a life of incarceration. He is too good a character to let go unused, and he would add some muscle, and a little tension, to the Squad's line-up.

Having said my piece, I will end this letter with a resounding thank you—THANKS, PEOPLE! Keep up the inspiring work.

Sincerely,
Scott R. Pyle
IUP
428 Esch Hall
Indiana, PA 15705

*Thank you, Scott. Couple of points of clarification, though. Mr. Nazair wasn't the Egyptian Prime Minister, but the head of their secret service.*

*As for a clearer distinction between Ravan and Ben, that's easy! Ravan's dead as a doornail! I'd have thought it was obvious! Sheesh!*

*Just kidding. I realize you didn't learn Ravan's tragic fate until the end of #47, Scott, so don't feel that you missed anything. And since you took my joke with such good humor, we'll be bringing back everyone's favorite Stalinist hard-liner, Stalnoivolk, around SUICIDE SQUAD #53.*

* * * * *

Dear John, Kim, and Geof,

This letter is in reference to SUICIDE SQUAD #45. I really liked the Israeli super group, Hayoth. I was really impressed with Golem and Judith. Ramban is okay, but he appears to rely too heavily on his staff. The jury's still out on Dybbuk. At first they appeared to be villains, but if they are at odds with Kobra, they cannot be all bad.

I was not aware that Egypt had their own super group, the Mamelukes. I do not recall ever seeing them before in any other DC title. Why not have them appear in SUICIDE SQUAD or another title so we can see them in action? I'm extremely interested in getting a peek at them.

Lastly, is it possible that this new Atom might be the old Atom, complete with cosmetic changes and faked death? I hope you guys keep doing the fine job that you're doing. I'm really enjoying what's going on so far.

Sincerely,
Joseph I. Brown
Rt. 2 Box 175
Bolton, MS 39041

*You haven't seen the Mamelukes before because John and Kim made them up especially for SQUAD #45.*

*And the new Atom being the old one doctored up? DON'T BE SILLY! The old Atom wore a red and blue suit! Are all you guys blind? The New Atom wears green!*

* * * * *

Dear Dan:
RE: Issue #46
Read my lips: Wow.

Sir Jon Johnson
64 Indian Hill Lane
Portland, CT 06480

*Thanks, m'lord.*

* * * * *

Dear Good Guys,

"HOT!" That's the only word to describe SUICIDE SQUAD #46. From Ivy and the Count sitting by the pool to Kobra's seduction of Dybbuk, it's all there—the action, the suspense, and the intrigue.

How about showing us the full text of Kobra's little speech? It must have been one hell of a speech if Dybbuk actually fell for it. And I am still waiting for the Atom's story.

Pairing off the various members of the Squad was a brilliant move. Can't wait to see more of the pair of Deadshot and his "sidekick," Boomerang.

Now, please bring back Nemesis. I have been a fan of his ever since his early appearances in THE BRAVE AND THE BOLD, so please get him back into the Squad.

Finally, what's up for issue #50?

Melvin Yong
5A Lloyd Road
SINGAPORE 0923

*Nemesis is up, Melvin. More later.*

* * * * *

Dear Squadders:

As a long-time Atom fan, I liked the cover of SS#46. The Atom's best adventures were when he was "a fish out of water" and I'm glad you're continuing the tradition.

I liked the Ivy-Vertigo subplot and hope it'll be pursued once the Kobra storyline is over.

The Hayoth is an interesting team and Dybbuk's teaming with Kobra is a logical, though foolhardy, venture.

This is even better than "The Phoenix Gambit" storyline and your whole team deserves a lot of credit.

Gerald (Jerry) Wilson
Lincoln, NE

*Thanks, Jerry! What did you think of the abrupt disruption of the Ivy/Vertigo relationship by Amanda in #47?*

* * * * *

Dear Dan:

I was wary of the changes in SUICIDE SQUAD but I'm glad to find that my caution was unnecessary. I admit that the plot of "The Phoenix Gambit" confused me but the characters were as interesting as ever. The current Kobra storyline is easier to read and seems to be placing the Suicide Squad in a better spotlight than their previous adventure.

"Choice of Evils" in SUICIDE SQUAD #46 did a good job of furthering Kobra's latest scheme, but its main points for me were Mari's wounding and The Atom's espionage role. I was surprised to read in the lettercol this issue that The Vixen is not as popular as I had thought, and this piece of news makes me less certain of Mari's survival. The Vixen, however, is more than just a player on the Squad's team: she is also a key to Ben's return to mental health. For that reason, I feel Mari should not be dismissed. Ben without Mari would be too similar to Deadshot, and the Squad without Mari would be a Squad without a conscience. I hope that Ray Palmer's decision to join forces with Amanda will be explained in the

near future, but his presence in the Suicide Squad is an intriguing turn of events. I am a bit confused about his shrinking powers, however. When confronted with the scorpions, why didn't he just shrink to microscopic size to remain out of sight and danger? Ditto when he was spotted by Kobra. For this reason, the final panel of this issue failed to elicit any sense of peril or suspense.

The Poison Ivy/Count Vertigo scenes were priceless, and I'm glad to read that the Count realizes Ivy's hold over him. Had the Count become a mindless obedient servant, the situation would have quickly become stale. I look forward to seeing what their part in this storyline will be. By the way, is Amanda aware of Ivy's control over Count Vertigo?

The mission by mission approach to SUICIDE SQUAD should enable the players to be featured more than they have in the past, but I do hope that the frequency of guest stars does not wane. The rotating cast and the constant flux of characters are positive qualities of this book that I do not wish to see disappear for the sake of this becoming another "team book." Also, I hope that the personal conflicts and subplots that were a big part of the previous Squad reappear in this "new" Squad as well. In particular, I am interested in seeing who Amanda locks horns with now that she no longer has someone to whom she reports.

Sincerely,
Jim Kelly
29 West Melrose Street
Valley Stream, NY 11580-4503

*Hey, I didn't say Vixen was unpopular, Jim, just that I didn't care for her myself. Loads of people like her. And frankly, she's a better lunch date than Amanda or Boomerang. But I don't understand your questions about the late, lamented Ray Palmer. He didn't fight any Scorpions, the new Atom did.*

*Thanks for writing, Jim.*

* * * * *

Hey, Dan—

Here are a few random thoughts and comments concerning SUICIDE SQUAD #46.

1) The subplot concerning Ivy and Vertigo is pretty interesting. I can hardly wait till the Count butchers her and then has to explain himself to Mammy Waller.

2) Which airline were Lawton and Harkness flying? Mesaba? It sounds like one of their usual tricks.

3) The battle between Atom and the scorpions was great. It was like stepping back into the old SWORD OF THE ATOM stuff from a few years back. I liked it.

4) "*My woman*"? Well, well, well . . . Is there some semblance of the old Ben left after all? And will Mari live to see and deal with it? I certainly hope so. They deserve each other.

5) I'm glad Luke did the pencils this time around. Any chance of keeping him on the title?

Lookin' forward to the Ravan/Kobra rumble.

Uncle Elvis
17650 Dawson Road
Dawson Springs, KY 42408

*Unc, Luke pencilled this issue, most of #50, and all of #51.*

* * * * *

Dear Dan,

With #45, it seems like the entire creative team has improved and that the book has reached the level "The Phoenix Gambit" was striving for.

I have a feeling the luggage will be lost. Deadshot is one of the last remaining members (not including Batman) to use a costume. His ability comes from himself, not the outfit he wears. Once Deadshot realizes this, then the team will be costumeless except for Count Vertigo.

Oh, you got so miffed about people reading the coming attractions before the story that the print of the letter column changed.

Melissa Page
236 New Salem Loop
Nortonville, KY 42442

*No, I got so* late *that the typeface changed. Same reason #48 didn't have a lettercol at all, Melissa. Sorry, and thanks for writing.*

* * * * *

Dear Suicidals:

Even though this is SUICIDE SQUAD, where characters really do die, I know you won't kill Vixen. I mean, she's a hero, and the heroes don't die, right, guys? Guys?

On other notes of dead heroes, I'm more convinced than ever that the "new" Atom is indeed Ray Palmer. I mean, after his scene spying on Kobra, it struck me that while a novice would not be completely familiar with Kobra's style, Ray would through his association with Batman. Besides, no one's got moves like Ray, and he sure showed them off against the swarm of scorpions. So, face it, I've seen through your little ruse. Now, I fully expect a contingent of old JLAers, led by Batman and Green Arrow, to pop up here looking for the truth.

I like Kobra's new "cosmic type" powers. It seems he is able to control, or at least influence, other beings, including the scorpions and the Dybbuk. It would be interesting to see him use this ability against Ravan—or even better, on Vertigo, removing him from Ivy's control. Intriguing, no?

Dybbuk reminds me of Ifrit, a.k.a. the late Mindboggler. What became of that digitized intelligence? I assume it's still in Belle Reve. A trip back to Belle Reve is a necessity. There are all kinds of plot lines hanging over there.

How would Ravan feel about having to go against a new Jihad? I think it would be a true test of his loyalties. Some of them are still around, and what's to stop Qurac from starting a new team? Also, I don't buy that the Manticore is dead. I like the idea that it might be immortal. Think about it!

Other things you should think about following up on—Nemesis: How come Amanda hasn't tried to track him down yet? He's too good a character to stay in limbo. Ditto for Nightshade. June Moone: the former Enchantress hasn't been seen since she tried to kill Nightshade—I have faith that she could be a great character, even without the Succubus. The ghost of Dr. Light: C'mon, he was too much fun to let him stay dead—especially after he conquered his phobia by killing Sparkler. I think that either the Phantom Stranger, Madame Xanadu, or even Deadman could find a way to send him back to the physical plane. You wouldn't have made him a ghost if you didn't have plans (I've heard rumors tht both the Stranger and Madame Xanadu are getting their own books, and a guest appearance could be a good lead-in.)

Also, please consider bringing in/back the following characters: Punch and Jewelee (after being busted in HAWK & DOVE), Scarecrow (following his BATMAN appearance), Shadow Thief (PLEASE! He's great in HAWKWORLD!), Mr. Bones, Artemis, and Hazzard (three great characters lingering in limbo.). Also, since Manhunter won't work for Amanda anymore, maybe she could consider using Golden Snowball Recoveries when special needs arise. After all, Captain Cold has worked with the Squad, and Golden Glider's too bloodthirsty to waste anywhere else (except FLASH).

Issue #50 is around the corner. Any hints?

Julio Diaz
8713 Linda Court
Tampa, FL 33604

*You don't need any hints, Julio! Just re-read your own letter! Either that or read . . .*

*Everyone's favorite Next Issue Box!*

It's hard to believe that SUICIDE SQUAD is going to be *50* next month! And for that special issue, John and Kim have crafted a story that spans over thirty years of Squad history, and features the return of some of the group's oldest friends (and enemies)! For a list, just scan Julio Diaz's letter above (boy, is that guy smart).

SUICIDE SQUAD #50 is double-sized, and features a veritable cornucopia of the book's creators, reuniting for a mega blow-out issue. We got John and Kim, of course, with Luke McDonnell, Geof Isherwood, Grant Miehm, and Karl Kesel as the beaver.

It's an awesome tale we just badda call . . .

"The Legacy of Rick Flag."

See you then.

—Dan Raspler
fugitive

NEXT ISSUE